A HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS
AT GRATERFORD PRISON

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</th>
<th>ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TABLE CONTENTS</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTERS

### 1. INTRODUCTION
- Statement of the Problem: 2
- Purpose of the Study: 3
- Theoretical Bases and Organization: 4
- Limitations of the Study: 6
- Review of the Literature: 7
- Methodology: 14

### 2. POPULAR MYTHS OF PEOPLE IN PRISON

### 3. THE HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS AT GRATERFORD
- Graterford Prison: 25
- The Para-Professional Law Clinic: 27
- L.A.C.E.O. (Latin American Cultural Exchange Organization): 32
- U.C.A.N. (United Community Action Network) and F.A.C.T. (Fathers and Children Together): 34
- Graterford Branch N.A.A.C.P. (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People): 35
- V.U.A.A.G. (Villanova University Alumni Association Graterford Chapter): 37

### 4. HOSTAGE INCIDENT OF 1982 AND RAID ON GRATERFORD OF 1995

### 5. SUMMARY

### CONCLUSION

### WORKS CITED

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iii
ABSTRACT

This research focused on whether all prisons are crucibles for criminal activity; specifically, the maximum security state prison in Graterford, Pennsylvania. The popular myths of people in prison have marred much of the works performed by organizations led by incarcerated people within Graterford.

Most of the research employed organizational documents such as By-Laws, Yearly Plans of Action, a Dossier, and historical accounts written by founding members of the organizations studied. Additionally, related government reports and newspaper articles were incorporated in the research process.

Works written by Sociologists and Criminologists were sources of references utilized for the structure of the thesis, content, and provided a framework for the conclusions presented by the research.

Finally, the popular myths of incarcerated people were challenged by the history of the organizations at Graterford, including the notion of all prisons being crucibles for criminal activity.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1978, the formation of a theory group under the direction of a staff psychologist led to the eventual birth of the foremost organization within the maximum security state prison at Graterford (“L.I.F.E.R.S. History” 2014). It was named L.I.F.E.R.S. (Long Incarcerated Fraternity Engaging Release Studies) and by 1981 it was recognized as an official organization by the formerly known Pennsylvania Bureau of Corrections (Department of Corrections) and the Graterford administration.¹ The organization's membership began with thirty incarcerated people and has grown to number approximately two-hundred and thirty-four (“L.I.F.E.R.S History” 2014).

The formation of L.I.F.E.R.S. marked a trending shift in the administrative approach and treatment toward groups within the prison. The penological philosophy in corrections had significantly shifted from rehabilitative to punitive practices between the 1960s and 1980s (Siegel and Senna 500-501). A rise in crime, riots within New York's Attica State Prison and California's San Quentin State Prison in 1971 respectively, drew public and political concerns that called for harsher, stricter prison reform (501). Notwithstanding the change in the corrections climate, the L.I.F.E.R.S. organization was not only created, but flourished within Graterford.

Statement of the Problem

As a result of the shift in the corrections climate and establishment of organizations within Graterford, the research conducted focused on the central question: Are all prisons crucibles for criminal activity? Most prisons censor and restrict group functions, especially in the context of organizations. Interestingly, the Graterford administration authorized the formation and replication of not only one, but several. The Department of Corrections eventually centralized the organizations due to their therapeutic effect (Pennsylvania. D.O.C. 2007).

If the reasons for the shift in corrections outlined above are justified, then what influenced the authorization, creation, and centralization of the organizations within Graterford? What was their purpose? Did they operate independently of the goals and mission of the Graterford administration? Why was Graterford different than other Pennsylvania institutions? These questions were explored along with the focal point of the study: are all prisons crucibles for criminal activity?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to explore how past research on people in prisons and their participation in groups compared to the organizations in Graterford in contrast with the popular myths of people in prisons. In the 1980s, Mark Hamm examined self-help groups in prisons (49-56). He identified organizations such as the N.A.A.C.P., the

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Black Muslims, and Urban League as some structured groups that existed within federal institutions. Hamm concluded that these were community groups established on racial and ethnic affiliations. His research, along with others, focused on substance and alcohol abuse therapy groups in federal prisons. The scope of Hamm's research did not include organizations within state institutions or studies outside of substance and alcohol abuse therapy; particularly, in Graterford. Other researchers have analyzed how organizations function within state institutions and their effects on the prison or group membership in the gang context (Jacobs 395-408).

James B. Jacobs' study within an Illinois state prison concluded that most organizations or groups revolved around religion, gang activity, or political affiliation. His study also revealed that most of the groups were violent or counter-productive. In approximately the same period of Jacobs' research, organizations such as the L.I.F.E.R.S. emerged within Graterford. The nature and function of the organizations in this Pennsylvania prison were antithetical to Jacobs' findings. Although the research was conducted in the 1980s, these findings are still quoted in current literature about prison.

In the penology field, much of the literature, research, and findings particular to groups or organizations project antiquated theories that need to be reassessed; especially, as they are related to Graterford.

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Graterford was unique as a maximum security state prison in the crime control era of corrections. The organizations that have existed for decades within the prison challenged the research findings posited by many social scientists. An examination of the history of these organizations presented new issues to be explored in the context of a Pennsylvania state prison, the relationship between structured groups and prison administrations, and how it can extend our present knowledge of the effects these types of activities have within a maximum security state institution. In addition, the popular myths of people in prison propagated by the media, prison experts, incarcerated individuals, and ignorance are also empirically challenged through a historical lens.

Theoretical Bases and Organization

The theoretical bases and organization of the thesis centered on Donald Clemmer and Gresham Sykes' foundational works.5 Their concepts have been the framework for literature by social scientists and their views about prison. Clemmer's prisonization and Sykes' pains of imprisonment theories have provided grounds for a conceptual analysis of the research conducted and how it relates to the history of the organizations within Graterford. By Clemmer's definition, prisonization is the process by which a newly incarcerated person adapts to prison society (Clemmer 298-301). The process is characterized by embracing the prison subculture or the inmate code and those that become the most institutionalized will be least likely to reform on the outside.

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Sykes built on Clemmer's analysis of people in prison with the conceptual introduction of the pains of imprisonment (102). According to Sykes, an incarcerated person suffers deprivation or frustration with regard to social acceptance, material possessions, heterosexual relationships, personal autonomy, and personal security. Both Clemmer and Sykes' concepts combined constituted the Deprivation Model (Siegel and Senna 530).

Theoretically, the culture based on deprivation of needs identified by Clemmer and Sykes presumed that all people responded to prison conditions similarly or within the design of the Deprivation Model's sociological framework. This thesis contains an examination of how Graterford's unique history of organizations corresponds to the theory of the Deprivation Model and how people in Graterford have demonstrated characteristics such as initiative, creativity, forward thinking, and productive organizational skills within the prison setting, including a consideration of recognized social, institutional, and educational factors that commonly inhibit a productive prison life.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study related to being incarcerated. Access to the internet, university libraries, and material documents was restricted compared to the average graduate student. However, due to the nature of the research topic and its location, when access to limited resource material proved problematic; intimate knowledge of both the central question explored and prison life at Graterford was easily accessible. As a long
time incarcerated person at Graterford, the effects of the organizations have been well observed. Consequently, the research conducted expanded an already conversant knowledge base.

Yearly Plans of Action, By-Laws, legal cases, and a dossier were easily provided by the presidents of each organization. These material documents proved invaluable for historical analysis as primary sources. Written by founding or existing members, the contents found in these documents explained the organizational history, structures, goals, and missions. Other primary sources such as government reports and newspaper articles were made available by people within the institution. Most secondary sources were researched in the prison library. Requests for outside sources such as, academic journals, related books, essays or any other materials were accommodated by those who supported the writing of this thesis. Despite residing in a restrictive environment, it is strongly believed that neither the research, nor the sources examined were compromised by the prison setting.

Review of the Literature

Much of the literature about prison touches on the sociological research of Donald Clemmer and Gresham Sykes. As touchstones of prison studies, the works of Clemmer and Sykes have provided a framework to guide the research conducted and sources

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examined. As historical writings on prisons, Clemmer's research was conducted in the 1940s and Sykes' in the 1960s, other social scientists have either added or challenged the prisonization and pains of imprisonment theories of the Deprivation Model. As a comprehensive process, Clemmer concluded that prisonization was individualized and shaped by personality, environment, and relationships established outside of prison (298-310). The concept of prisonization created negative connotations and perceptions of people in prison by projecting universal ideas of the incarceration experience.

Clemmer's research was particular to the incarcerated people and prison studied. Two decades later, Stanton Wheeler empirically tested Clemmer's prisonization theory and found the concept substantiated by his findings in a study he conducted at the Washington State Reformatory (307). Wheeler suggested that the degree of prisonization varied according to the phase of a resident's institutional career. This concept was coined the career phase which measured prisonization in three phases: the first six months, time incarcerated, and last six months prior to release (Reid 474).

Gresham Sykes' pains of imprisonment theory, influenced by Clemmer, claimed that subcultures found in prisons are adaptations caused by deprivation of needs while incarcerated. The limitations created by the prison environment offered few alternatives to alleviate the deprivation of needs. Thus, two choices were presented to the person incarcerated, either unite in the spirit of mutual cooperation with other incarcerated people, or withdraw in an attempt to satisfy personal needs (Sykes and Messinger 17).

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According to Sykes, the prison social system minimized the pains of imprisonment through cooperation.

However, concerns over methodology and the results of Clemmer, Sykes, and Wheeler's studies have centered on the assumed deleterious effects prison life has on people. In his study, Edward Zamble reported how an absence of consideration for psychological factors provided an incomplete analysis of people in prison (Reid 424). In fact, psychological stability was observed in long term residents. Social isolation, despair, and rebellion were uncharacteristic and "emotional states, health, and conduct in the institutions generally improved over time." The research conducted by Clemmer, Sykes, and Wheeler were in an era of corrections coined progressive. Although the progressive correctional philosophy never fully materialized, this proved to be the light post in the thesis.

The Deprivation Model was articulated in the Rehabilitation or Age of Reform phase in corrections. This era of corrections was characterized by a new classification system introduced by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. It focused on treatment based on psychological theories of crime, curing the resident, education, reduction of sentences, and parole (Sheldon et al. 271-273). The shift in correctional philosophy was accompanied by Law and Order government policies that emphasized segregation by incarceration in opposition to the Civil Rights Movement (Alexander 40). These factors competed against one another and true correctional reform was never accomplished. The

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traditional prison model remained along with the mentality of discipline and labor as corrective measures (Sheldon 273). Two other factors also remained the same, the amount of funding for treatment never increased and administrative needs trumped those of rehabilitative programs within prisons.

In this context, Clemmer and Sykes' theories should apply to all prisons due to the overall consistency of punitiveness irrespective of the correctional era. However, research has shown how administrative behaviors can influence a person's conduct either negatively or positively (Huebner 107-117). Other research has shown how people will maintain their own subculture irrespective of administrative behaviors or influence (Irwin 971-973). The Age of Reform and all its shortcomings had little effect on life in prisons. Unfortunately, the transition between the fairly recent crime control model and the decades old rehabilitation approach was immaterial.

The review of primary sources such as the government report issued in response to a hostage incident at Graterford provided insight and corroborated the claim of how conditions within this Pennsylvania prison differed from the studies supporting the Deprivation Model. The findings of the Government Panel reflected how the flawed classification process then in use exposed the prison population to a few radical individuals. More importantly, the incident was not in response to conditions or reflected the subculture described in the Deprivation Model.

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' policy statement demonstrated how their current Inmate and Therapeutic Activities were modeled after the progressive ideas
of the former Commissioner of Corrections, Allyn Sielaff, in 1970. Organizations were authorized to exist and operate independently of staff leadership. Administration oversight was more concerned with authorizing functions rather than developing and structuring the organizations. Prison staff liaisons were also an extension of the administrative oversight in the structured group setting; however, their roles were limited to supervising meetings and functions. Each Pennsylvania institution had its own in-house policy as to the number of organizations and how they operated. As to Graterford, what distinguished it from other Pennsylvania state prisons was the appointment of its first black superintendent in 1971. Superintendent Robert L. Johnson utilized the Great Society initiative, which provided federal funding to state institutions for educational programs at the time.

As a beneficiary of both the superintendent's penological philosophy and federal funding, the L.I.F.E.R.S.'s Dossier provided an in depth look into its history, relationship with the institution, and works produced over its existence as a primary source (“L.I.F.E.R.S. History” 2014). Newspaper and academic articles were also researched and documented the effects L.I.F.E.R.S. has had on its membership and the larger community.12

Another primary source, the N.A.A.C.P.'s Yearly Plan of Action for 2017, provided a historical account of the organization's inception, its mission, plans for

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11 In the Pennsylvania Dept. of Corrections, Graterford has the most resident led organizations, see Holy Name Society v. Horn. U.S. Dist. LEXIS 12756, Eastern District Court of PA, 2001.

fundraising, and proposals made to the administration for special events to be held within
the institution (2017). It also demonstrated the organizational structure necessary to
stand out as an independent body within the institution and how the Graterford
Administration responded to that status (Link 2017).

Similarly, the by-laws of L.A.C.E.O. (Latin American Cultural Exchange
Organization) and its Yearly Plan of Action for 2017 demonstrated how an organization
can fulfill its mission while remaining within administratively set boundaries. The by-
laws were submitted to the Deputy of Centralized Services in 1988, which govern the
organization's operation until this day. These primary sources demonstrated the level of
professionalism exhibited by its executive board and membership and how these
individuals responded to the prison environment at Graterford.

The Villanova University Alumni Association Graterford Chapter (V.U.A.A.G.)
has a long educational history within the prison (Davis and Barmister 2009). As a
primary source, this document revealed how the organization distinguished itself through
academic achievements and educational activities. Many of its founding and governing
body were also members of one or several of the organizations outlined above. As a
result, V.U.A.A.G. has contributed or sponsored inter-organizational functions within the
institution that have contributed to the development and growth of each organization.

All of these primary sources revealed how the organizations' missions and goals
coincided with those of the prison administration. More importantly, they demonstrated
how Graterford's Administration supported and authorized many of the organizations'

proposals for functions and activities within the institution. The presence established by the organizations was not only sustained, but also cultured institutionally.

A final review of the literature revealed two other organizations that no longer exist within the institution. However, they are worth being acknowledged for historical accuracy. The Brotherhood Jaycees went defunct on or about 2008 due to lack of membership support for the charter. It was recognized as an official organization by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and operated as one. The organization's fundraising centered on the vending of photo tickets that were primarily used in the visiting room or special events within the prison. This commodity was ultimately subsumed by the N.A.A.C.P. Unfortunately, historical documents were unavailable for analysis. Legal cases made mention of the organization's existence, but nothing further (Mays v. Fulcomer 1989).

The Para-Professional Law Clinic actually pre-dated the L.I.F.E.R.S. organization (2003). It was founded in 1971 to provide residents with legal assistance. It became incorporated in 1976 as a non-profit corporation under Pennsylvania law. A board of directors governed the Law Clinic. Members were elected and were paid through the Department of Corrections work compensation system.

The Graterford Administration announced the Law Clinic's closing in 1977, but a court ruling prevented it under federal law (Wade v. Kane 1978). On April 26, 1996, the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995 was signed into law by the U.S. Congress, which announced the shift from federal interference in administrative functions within state

prisons to a hand's off policy (8 USC 1321). The new legislation led to legal battles between the Law Clinic and the Department of Corrections. The Law Clinic was officially closed in 2004 after several unfavorable rulings. The closing of the Law Clinic raised questions as to what form of education was prioritized in Pennsylvania Corrections and what types of organizations were acceptable.

The overall effect the voluntary nature of the organizations had within Graterford was clear. The research allowed for the distinct observation of state mandated programs compared to voluntary ones and their level of participation by the people in the prison. As parole stipulations for release, people were ordered to attend and participate in programs mandated by Department of Corrections and Pennsylvania Parole Board policies. In comparison, the centralized organizations and their programs were characterized by voluntary enrollment and participation. This also raised questions as to how people in Graterford viewed their roles within organizations compared to state mandated programs.

Methodology

In reviewing government reports, newspaper articles, legal cases, organizational by-laws, and yearly plans of action, including books related to crime, criminal justice, race, and political justice it became clear that a combination of historicism and social history were the methodological applications most appropriate for the research conducted.

The emphasis on studying the past as it was oriented the research, especially while recognizing that the organizations were manifestations of the human spirit. As an
approach to writing history, John Tosh explained historicism as having three characteristics:

(1) separating our own age from all others, while avoiding assumptions that people behaved the same way we do now and also recognize that these people are of the past, not necessarily alien [Difference, Anachronism, Empathy]; (2) the subject is not to be wrenched from its setting [Context]; and (3) the relationship between events over time endows them with more significance than if they were viewed in isolation (Tosh 8-11).

These principles applied well to the research process conducted here since the roots of the organizations were traced back to the 1970s. This era in corrections and society at large was faced with a political climate that negatively influenced government policies toward minorities and their communities.15

In order to present how the government policies influenced corrections and the Graterford Administration's approach toward people in particular, a narrative style was utilized to add form and coherence to the thesis, along with the chronological representation of dates with respect to the appearance of the organizations. This approach directly addressed the need to answer the salient questions pronounced by the research: What influenced the authorization and creation of the organizations within Graterford? What was their purpose? Did they operate independently of Graterford's

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administrative goals and mission? Why was Graterford different than other Pennsylvania institutions?

The theory of Social History; specifically, *History from Below* includes the histories and politics of all marginalized groups (Tosh 71). History is often written by those in power. The muted voices of the marginalized and oppressed remained obscured. In this historical context, the central question of the thesis was explored and examined in its relation to the history of the organizations at Graterford: Are all prisons crucibles for criminal activity?

The time period central to the research extended from 1970 to 1995. The time between these two dates marked an era that saw a shift in Pennsylvania Corrections with the appointment of a new commissioner in 1970. In 1971, Graterford saw the arrival of its first black superintendent. The following two decades were composed of successive inceptions of the three most recognized organizations within Graterford and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

The use of dates, primary, and secondary sources referenced outside of the focal time period were incorporated as complimentary elements necessary in painting a clear historical landscape. More importantly, secondary sources targeted such as sociological studies of people in prison dated prior to or contemporaneously with the inceptions of the organizations at Graterford demonstrated how government policies, prison reform, and public perception of people in prison were influenced in the period researched.

Finally, labeling language such as *prisoner, convict, resident, inmate* was substituted with the appropriate descriptor of *people in prison*. Although describing
people in prison with these terms is widely accepted, the dehumanizing connotations are
typically taken for granted. By reframing these labels, the effects of the organizations' work was expanded linguistically and not seen solely within the prison context, but as services and work provided by people in prison.
CHAPTER 2

POPULAR MYTHS OF PEOPLE IN PRISON

For over a century, high profile criminal cases have been the catalyst for the dominant narrative about people in prison. In many instances, it was the only medium that allowed the public access of what people in prison looked and acted like. Politicians and the public at large have drawn on these examples to substantiate or swell the popular myths of people in prison. In the mid-1980s, Presidential candidate George Bush lambasted his political foe, Michael Dukakis, for the release of Willie Horton. While on furlough from a Massachusetts prison, Horton sexually assaulted a woman and viciously attacked her husband in Maryland. Dukakis signed off on Horton's release while he was governor of Massachusetts and eventually lost the election due to the perceived political blunder (Clear and Cole 5). The Three Strikes legislation was fueled by the murder of Polly Klass in California and Megan's Law was passed when a released sex offender in New Jersey raped and murdered Megan Kanka (6).

Historically, in the 1920s and 1930s popular fear was founded on news of people on parole committing horrific crimes (Clear and Cole 66). Daily cycles of national and local news either furthered public fear or fueled anger in those types of cases. The fear and anger generated by those stories were also directed toward people already in prison through tougher legislation and stricter parole requirements. In colonial times, the poor were targeted for incarceration due to their perceived threat to the social fabric of society
(Rothman 58-59). In the 1830s, prison reformers believed that people in prison lacked respect for authority and proper work habits (Sheldon et al. 268). These examples demonstrated how high profile cases influenced the public, elections, laws, and reinforced or propagated the popular myths of people in prison.

However, the public today has unprecedented access into the incarcerated world through various media channels. The days of relying on sociological studies or political rhetoric in order to formulate an opinion about incarcerated people are long gone. Reality shows bear uncensored details about those incarcerated and the world behind bars.\(^{16}\) These shows allow the public to use their own discretion for formulating opinions about the content in these programs. The level of public consumption of the reality version of the incarcerated world is problematic. By having unlimited access to reality bits of the inside, the popular myths of people in prison becomes much more difficult to debunk or consider critically. By viewing these programs, the public believes they are informed and can make accurate assessments about those who are incarcerated. Depictions of violence, substance abuse, and mental health issues capture part of the reality. These representations are incomplete illustrations and sensationalize the incarcerated experience.

More importantly, the majority of the shows are filmed in jails and not prison. Prison life is considerably different than living in jail. Jails predominantly house individuals that have been incarcerated for less than a year and are awaiting trial, while people in prison are serving more than two years for a criminal conviction. Individuals

\(^{16}\) “60 Days In... Atlanta”, Arts and Entertainment Network, 10 May 2017; “Hard Time”, National Geographic Channel, 14 June 2017; “Locked Up Abroad”. National Geographic Channel, 9 June 2017.
serving long sentences in prison are more invested in maintaining their privileges or established prison lives that are otherwise non-existent in jails (Siegel and Senna 508-512). As for shows that are filmed in prisons, the images portrayed cannot be considered universal representations of prison life, which varies between state institutions. Furthermore, individual testimonies from people in jail or prison are not necessarily indicative of the overall experience within the respective institution. Not all incarcerated people practice the same behavior collectively such as gang activity, homosexuality, or religion.

As a maximum security state institution, the research of the organizations at Graterford did not reflect the ones portrayed in the reality shows (Dubler 126-127). Statistically, Graterford's population resembled the current landscape of incarcerated people nationally. As of 2013, sixty-seven percent of the people in Graterford were African American compared to the national average of just over forty percent in 1995, 2003, and 2004 respectively. National statistics demonstrated how people in state prisons have histories of violent offenses, mental health issues, and substance abuse (U.S. Department of Justice 1). As a state prison, it is safe to presume Graterford was no exception. However, the violence level at Graterford was low compared to national levels. In 1995, there were 102 reported assaults compared to 32 in 1998.18

Figures such as these have led social scientists to question the effectiveness of their studies in relating the prison experience as comprehensive analyses (Clear and Cole 290). There have been numerous writings on the stereotypes about crime and people who

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18 Dubler 73; Siegel and Senna 546.
Yet, the constant variable to consider is the role subjectivity plays in the arena of public opinion. With stereotypical references marking the threat of prison rape or fictional shows as *OZ*, HBO's cable show on prison, the line between myth and reality is often blurred (1997). Siphoning the facts from these and the other sources outlined above in order to understand the incarcerated world has proven problematic. Even more concerning, is the application of this understanding to all people in prison, including its influence on government policies.

As with any social issue, there has always been a level of disconnect between perception and reality. Polls dating back to slavery and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s showed that the majority of white citizens believed African Americans were treated fairly. Similarly, the Pew Research Center conducted a survey that found thirty-seven percent of white citizens as compared to seventy percent of African Americans felt that Black citizens were treated unfairly by police and the courts. Issues of privilege and indifference have contributed to these misconceptions. Consider how the poverty rate among blacks is consistently overestimated by Whites (Shelby 56). For whatever reason, a lack of knowledge, racism, and distorted narratives have perpetuated the disconnection between perception and reality with certain social issues, especially in the prison context.

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In the sphere of Criminal Justice, a national study conducted in 1975 by Robert Martinson on rehabilitation in prisons revealed that rehabilitative efforts have no appreciable effect on recidivism (1975). This study influenced government policy on prison reform; however, Martinson failed to examine how ineffective measures such as a lack of funding, unqualified personnel, overcrowding, and the practice of administrative needs superseding those of treatment affected rehabilitative programs and impeded their efficacy (Clear and Cole 70). Also problematic was the use of recidivism as the indicator of success for rehabilitation in prisons. This approach disregarded the causes of crime and societal factors at play in a person's life upon release that were not addressed systemically. For instance, laws that curtailed employment opportunities for people with criminal records have had devastating effects on the work force (Fagan and Freeman 211-299).

Recidivism rates have been consistently high since the 1920s.\textsuperscript{21} Analytical approaches toward calculating recidivism should be reconfigured by measuring a person's conduct and participation in voluntary programs such as in organizations found at Graterford. In turn, this would test the myths and public skepticism surrounding the level of sincerity questioned by a person's participation in programs in order to present a favorable prison record for parole release (Wheeler 307). Sixty-five percent of those who recidivate are predominantly rearrested for property crimes, drug offenses, or public-order offenses (non-violent offenses); this fact is lost to many in society.\textsuperscript{22} Even more


\textsuperscript{22} People who are convicted of murder are less likely to recidivate for another murder over a 40-year term and have been paragons within prisons. Pilgrim, Sorenson. "An Actual Risk Assessment of Violence Posed by Murder Defendants". *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, vol. 90, 2000, pp. 1251-1257; Siegal and Senna 442.
compelling, is how higher education has been shown as an indicator of low recidivism rates (Batiuk et al. 167-180).

In relation to crime and incarceration, the popular myths of people in prison again garnered attention in 1995. Two high profile cases that featured people released from Pennsylvania prisons drew nationwide criticism from politicians and the larger public. Mudman Simon, a person who was incarcerated at Graterford, shot and killed a New Jersey State Trooper while on parole (Philadelphia Inquirer, 1995). A few months earlier, Reginald McFadden, who was commuted by Pennsylvania Governor Bob Casey, raped and killed two elderly white women in New York (New York Times, 1995). As a result of those crimes, Pennsylvania's parole and commutation processes were revised and more stringent standards were instituted (Dubler 302-303).

Again, the rhetoric of panic and fear was reintroduced by politicians and the media for public consumption. Parole for people in Pennsylvania was practically halted and the commutation process became almost non-existent. The fear was that anyone leaving from a Pennsylvania prison was a potential Mudman or McFadden. These isolated cases were not reflective of the overall prison population in Pennsylvania and the data on recidivism. As a matter of public safety, the success stories of accomplished people on parole were inconsequential, even if they contributed to it. Unfortunately, high profile cases have and, more than likely, will continue to contribute to the popular myths of people in prison by one representing all and vice versa.
Ironically, social scientists have concluded that there is no correlation between the crime rate and incarceration. In the 1970s, the crime rate rose, then declined in the early 1980s to rise again later in the decade with the War on Drugs (Hinton 6). The incarceration rate has been on a steady incline since 1974 (Siegel and Senna 518). This documented fluctuation between high and low levels of crime and its relation to the incarceration rate has established the lack of any correlation. The causes for the increased prison population have been attributed to the building of more prisons, longer prison sentences, government policies directed at incarcerating minorities, and unsuccessful reentry programs. Yet, the popular myths of people in prison seem to lie on the notion that the incarcerated were inherently criminal without consideration for other factors that contributed to the perpetration of crime.

In 1974, crime increased twelve percent in large cities and twenty percent in suburban and rural areas (Federal Bureau of Investigation 1974). The implication was not simply racial, but also class-oriented. As an example, the scope of public perception fails to consider how most crimes on college campuses are unreported because of affluence, institutional bureaucracy and racial undertones.

Despite the criminal and socio-economic misconceptions shaping the popular myths of people in prison, organizations within Graterford have established themselves as transformational and transcendental entities since the 1970s. They have been centralized

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25 Shelby 210; Hinton 19.
26 Alexander 97-98; Reiman, Jeffrey. The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison: Ideology, Class, and Criminal Justice. 8\textsuperscript{t} ed, Allyn and Bacon, 2007.
by the Department of Corrections and supported by the Graterford Administration. More importantly, they have stood as competitors against the theory of the Deprivation Model.
CHAPTER 3

THE HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS
AT GRATERFORD

Timothy Flanagan, one of the foremost authorities on people who have been incarcerated long-term, posited three principles for a meaningful incarceration experience: "(1) maximizing opportunities for the prisoner to exercise choice in living circumstances; (2) creating opportunities for meaningful living, and; (3) helping the prisoner maintain contact with the outside world" (Flanagan 45-51). Since 1971, Graterford's Administration has epitomized Flanagan's theory by having afforded people with opportunities to create, organize, structure, and lead their own organizations despite the crime control policies of the time.

Graterford Prison

Graterford prison was built during the Big House era in corrections. It opened in 1931 as an agrarian facility (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 27). Its initial design did not consider space for program activities, schools, correctional industries or other services. It was built solely for warehousing incarcerated people (27). The following decades saw the transition from prison farm to penitentiary take place and by 1970 it housed sixteen hundred people. Most people in Graterford at the time were not required to attend educational classes staffed by one full-time teacher. Typically, prison employment was chosen over schooling because of pay wages.
Compared to National averages of people in prison, people in Graterford exhibited commensurate levels of education, mental health issues, employment histories, and level of offenses. As Graterford experienced an influx of urban, African American staff from Philadelphia that resulted from the official closing of its sister prison, Eastern State Penitentiary on April 13, 1970; the combination of predominantly suburban or rural white staff and their new coworkers, who resembled the people in Graterford in color and geographical affiliation, proved problematic (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 27). The Black Power and Prison Rights Movements of the 1960s and 1970s were at their peaks and were not received well by the predominantly white staff from Northeastern Pennsylvania (Siegel and Senna 549-553).

Graterford's transformation from prison farm to penitentiary saw its most forceful push when its first black Superintendent, Robert L. Johnson, was appointed in 1971 (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 28). He was an educated man with a Masters degree in Governmental Administration from Wharton School of Business, University of Pennsylvania. With the backing of the Commissioner of Corrections, Allyn Sielaff, Superintendent Johnson revised the prison pass system in order for people to move more freely within the institution. The emphasis was on programs and rehabilitative treatment, instead of a focus on discipline (28). Federal funding through the Great Society programs accommodated the Superintendent's vision by providing the resources for schooling, job training, and college education.

27 Siegel and Senna 513; Para-Professional Law Clinic v. Kane, 656 F Supplemental 1099, Eastern District Court of Pennsylvania, 1987; Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 52-54.
Substance abuse counseling, individual and group therapy, community work projects, and weekend furloughs were also initiated by Superintendent Johnson. This philosophy opened the door for the first official and subsequent organizations in Graterford. These organizations would appear significantly different than the athletic activities led by the incarcerated people at Graterford in the 1930s (Department of Justice 1924).

The Para-Professional Law Clinic

The Para-Professional Law Clinic pre-dated the L.I.F.E.R.S organization by several years. Founded in 1971, its primary purpose was to provide those who were ignorant of the law and illiterate people with legal assistance (Para-Professional Law Clinic 2003). By 1976, the Law Clinic became an incorporated non-profit corporation under Pennsylvania Law. Structurally, it was governed by a board of directors composed of elected officials through its membership vote. There were twenty-one members who were monetarily compensated through the Department of Corrections’ prison payment system.

Legal services extended beyond criminal cases. The Law Clinic provided services challenging prison misconducts and lawsuits, not only for illiterate people, but also those who were in administrative or disciplinary custody (Solitary Confinement), had mental health or special needs, or did not know English (Para-Professional Law Clinic 2003). The Law Clinic's work touched all facets of law and was open to all people in Graterford. With over one-hundred and thirty favorable legal results, the Law Clinic established itself as a formidable presence within the prison. For these reasons, in 1977, six years after the Law Clinic’s formation, the prison announced its closing.

28 Davis and Bannister 1; Booker, Vaughn and David Phillips. From Prison to Pulpit. Cadell and Davies, 1994, pp. 120-141.
The following year a Federal Court ruling ordered the Law Clinic to remain operational and accessible to people in Graterford (Wade v. Kane 1978). However, the prison Administration would not yield in its pursuit of the Law Clinic's closing. By 2004, its goal was realized through a court ruling and only remnants of the Law Clinic remained visible through a number of surviving members.

The Federal Court relied on the enactment of the Prison Litigation Reform Act of 1995 by Congress which specifically targeted state prisons and incarcerated people's due process rights (Para-Prof. 303-305). The intent of the Act was to limit federal interference with challenges of state prison conditions. The filing of frivolous lawsuits and strained court resources were reasons cited for the exercised federalism; perhaps, the Law Clinic's success as a legal entity within the prison and its apparent conflict with the Administration's mission can be cited as additional reasons for its closing. The Department of Corrections' Mission Statement reads as follows:

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections operates as one team, embraces diversity, and commits to enhancing public safety. We are proud of our reputation as leaders in the corrections field. Our mission is to reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to offenders, resulting in successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change (http://www.cor.pa.gov).

For all intent and purposes, the mission of the Department of Corrections did not include the successful Law Clinic's form of legal education. It was apparent how the Clinic's function did not conform to the Department of Corrections' idea of how an organization should operate due to the lack of Administrative oversight. Therefore, the Law Clinic failed to be classified as an authorized recreational and therapeutic activity
Undeniably, its accomplishments and structure illustrated the capabilities and skills of the people within Graterford.

**L.I.F.E.R.S.**

*(Long Incarcerated Fraternity Engaging Release Studies)*

The mission of the L.I.F.E.R.S. announced in 1981 the objective of securing legislation authorizing parole for people sentenced to a life sentence in Pennsylvania (Lifers History 1). The organization traces its origin to 1978. Under the direction of psychologist, Dr. Van Wye, a therapy group was formed in the Graterford treatment department. The group developed structurally and by 1981 the Graterford Administration and formerly known Pennsylvania Bureau of Corrections recognized the L.I.F.E.R.S. as an official organization (1). L.I.F.E.R.S. began with thirty incarcerated members.29 In the same year, L.I.F.E.R.S. filed for and received non-profit corporate status in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which led to its first organizational project, Thresholds, centered on problem-solving and decision making. As a result of their collaboration with Dr. Wye, the Graterford treatment program incorporated Thresholds into their therapeutic schedule.

The Department of Corrections required prison staff liaisons to monitor structured group functions and the submission of a Yearly Plan of Action for the Superintendent's approval due after the first of December of every year or election of its officers (Pennsylvania Department of Corrections 2007). Aside from the oversight purposes, the Yearly Plan of Action revealed

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and captured a detailed agenda directed at both institutional and community work characteristic of the organization ("L.I.F.E.R.S History" 2).

In 2016, community work consisted of:

- Fundraising for two non-profit foundations supporting victims and community services in Philadelphia.

- An annual Girl Scout cookie sale.

- The once a year event, A Day of Responsibility, which was designed to bring together victims of crime, families of the incarcerated, and community members for discussions that explore viable ways of promoting healing and reconciliation.

- A continued bi-monthly snack food sale in order to donate funds to charitable organizations.

- Facilitation of community transformation seminars and workshops under its Public Safety Initiative campaign.

Institutionally, the Yearly Plan of Action of 2016 consisted of:

- Cultural Awareness programs that focused on African American culture.

- Legal seminars conducted by lawyers and legislators for purpose of updating people serving life sentences of the most recent court decisions and policies.

- The development of effective listening, communication, and problem solving skills through the Just Listening Program instructed by Sharon Browning.

- The Performing Arts Project focused on highlighting challenges, hardships, and transformational experiences of incarceration through dramatic plays.

- The Bereavement Fund, which allowed for a financial contribution to a loved one of a deceased L.I.F.E.R.S.’ member.

- The continued publication of a monthly Legal Update and dissemination to the membership for current legal decisions.
Impressively, over fifteen thousand copies of the *Legal Update* have been circulated between the years of 2012 and 2016. Additionally, institutional policy dictated that all organizations were authorized a checking and/or savings account not to exceed $3000.00. The money was allocated for charitable events, donations, or sponsorship of activities within the prison (Pennsylvania Department of Corrections 2007). L.I.F.E.R.S. have used their money in compliance with policy and has been active in challenging the life without parole statute enacted in 1941 (Mauer et al. 7).

Either by constructing legislative Senate Bills or participating in studies for House Resolutions, the L.I.F.E.R.S. organization has been recognized for its works by politicians in the State's capital (Dossier 2009). The documented success stories of people commuted from their life without parole sentences have helped their cause. Two ex-presidents of the L.1.F.E.R.S. organization, Steve Blackburn and Tyrone Werts, have continued the work established inside Graterford while in the larger community. Blackburn co-founded a non-profit organization and eventually earned a Master’s Degree after initiating his academic career with an Associate's Degree from Villanova University's Graterford satellite (Geringer 2011). In addition to his success in the community, Werts was one of the founding members of the *Public Safety Initiative* while president of the L.1.F.E.R.S. As an offspring of L.1.F.E.R.S., the Public Safety Initiative was designed to end the culture of street crime (Harris 48-68).

These organizational and individual examples are a few documented highlights within recent history. Since the L.1.F.E.R.S. official inception in 1981, the amount of

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work and people that have contributed to a unique culture within Graterford and altruistic projects within the larger community has been unprecedented. Prior to 1971, Graterford was still in a transformational phase (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 28). Organizations led by incarcerated people were a foreign idea to an administration predominantly concerned with discipline and security over programs and treatment (28). The mission of the L.I.F.E.R.S. was not concerned solely with changing the life without parole statute in Pennsylvania. The Department of Corrections and L.I.F.E.R.S. missions seemed to coalesce in spirit despite their wording. Perhaps, this contributed to its longevity and prominence as the foremost in rank of all the organizations at Graterford.

L.A.C.E.O.
(Latin American Cultural Exchange Organization)

L.A.C.E.O. was formerly known as L.P.R.O. (Latin Prisoners Rights Organization). It was officially recognized as a structured organization by the Department of Corrections and the Graterford Administration on October 5, 1988 (LACEO 1988). The purpose of the organization was to focus on Latin American cultural awareness.

The organization's existence within Graterford prison has been another example of skilled and dedicated works exemplified by its membership. L.A.C.E.O. emerged as a prominent organization within the institution during the War on Drugs era, crack epidemic, and prison boom.31 Corrections in this period saw harsher sentences for drug offenses which increased the prison population exponentially and changed the makeup of

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31 Dubler 337; Hinton 6.
the overall prison population (Clear and Cole 72). As a result, Graterford became more diversified with an influx of Latinos. This was the impetus for the development of the organization.

However, similar to L.L.F.E.R.S., the scope of L.A.C.E.O.'s functions extended beyond its articulated purpose. Collaborations with community based organizations or individuals that created employment opportunities and pre-release preparation were incorporated later as L.A.C.E.O. developed organizationally. As part of its evolved mission, relationships were developed with the Graterford Administration in order to better present the needs of incarcerated Latinos. This development spoke to the heart of L.A.C.E.O.'s purpose, which was the empowerment of incarcerated Latinos who at the time numbered in the lowest percentile of Graterford's population.32

In the spirit of solidarity, L.A.C.E.O. did not exclude the membership of people from other nationalities (Article IV). Additionally, it was structured in traditional organizational style with a president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Membership meetings were scheduled quarterly and elections conducted bi-annually (Article V-VIII). Organizational work consisted of sponsored seminars within the prison on employment opportunities through the assistance of former Pennsylvania State Representative Leslie Acosta. Events and banquets have also been part of its twenty-nine year history.

Since 2009, L.A.C.E.O. has awarded forty-two scholarships to minority students from the Philadelphia and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, School Districts for the pursuit of

32 As of 2013, Latinos accounted for twelve percent of Graterford's population compared to sixty-seven percent African American and twenty percent white. See Dubler 327.
higher education learning.\textsuperscript{33} The organization's fundraising source has been the sale of ice cream within the prison, which proved to be a lucrative fiscal activity. Its \textit{Education Over Incarceration} campaign has been sustained and supported by the created finances. Sixteen schools were provided classroom supplies and books for seventh graders, which exceeded L.A.C.E.O.'s goals for its Yearly Plan of Action for 2017 (8). Over its history, L.A.C.E.O. birthed two independent organizations that also operated from within the prison, U.C.A.N. (United Community Action Network) and F.A.C.T. (Fathers and Children Together).

\begin{quote}
\textbf{U.C.A.N. (United Community Action Network) and F.A.C.T. (Fathers and Children Together)}

U.C.A.N. emerged as an outreach organization at Graterford as a result of the high rate of children murdered in Philadelphia in 2006. On January 15, 2007, a simulcast satellite address titled \textit{End the Violence} was made to the larger community of three-thousand people at the Community College of Philadelphia. The focus of the simulcast was to address the criminal mindset and negative influences amongst the youth.

As a result, a campaign that called for \textit{Education Over Incarceration\textsuperscript{®}} was launched in 2009 (www.ucancap.org). Over its short history, on May 22, 2008, U.C.A.N. broadcast live messages of social justice to the community through local radio stations, including WDAS 105.3 and POWER 99 FM Radio. On February 18, 2010, a series of school seminars were started and hosted at Fitz-Simmons Boys Academy by State Representative Ronald G. Waters and Thera Martin Connelly. Over four-hundred and
\end{quote}

fifty young men attended and heard the call for Education Over Incarceration®.

Consequently, the series of seminars extended to other schools in Philadelphia.

Members of U.C.A.N. initiated another organization that addressed the cradle to prison pipeline. F.A.C.T. was launched in 2012 in order to reconnect incarcerated fathers with their children. Through workshops held in the Graterford visiting room on how to be a responsible parent, both fathers and children were given the opportunity to bond and communicate on levels otherwise unavailable due to the prison environment. These structured groups exemplified how the men at Graterford optimized the opportunities provided by the prominent organizations' cache within the prison as platforms to launch programs specifically designed to address identified social justice needs. More importantly, the latitude given to the men in the design and operation of the structured groups demonstrated how the recent Graterford Administration continued the long history of support for those types of activities.

Graterford Branch N.A.A.C.P.
(National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)

In May of 1972, the N.A.A.C.P. Prison Program chartered its first branch at the Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary in Pennsylvania. Initially, the objective of the N.A.A.C.P. was to assist incarcerated people in constructive pursuits, aid in the rehabilitative process, and reduce the high rate of recidivism nationally (N.A.A.C.P. 1). Eventually, the Graterford Branch became an official N.A.A.C.P. charter in 1994. It is one of twenty-eight active prison branches. The mission of the Graterford Branch N.A.A.C.P. was to
aid in the rehabilitative process of people within the prison. Measures were utilized to accomplish its mission through structured activities, programs, and projects with the support of the Graterford Administration, Department of Corrections, state and federal resources, community based organizations, and families (1).

A review of the Yearly Plan of Action 2017 revealed a fundraising activity centered on the sale of picture tickets within the prison. Purchases of tickets were made through the prison commissary. Consequently, these funds, along with L.A.C.E.O.'s ice cream sales, have contributed five-hundred dollar scholarships for its Education Over Incarceration campaign (4). Also, a Bereavement Fund was established through its picture ticket sales. Programs and entertainment events centered on Black History Month, theater, music, and education were projected to be approved as a continuation of established functions of the N.A.A.C.P.'s past works.34 Although not overtly stated, those activities represented the N.A.A.C.P.'s mission. Rehabilitation was viewed as pragmatic therapy that emphasized "jobs, counseling, and opportunity" (Siegel and Senna 71). Organizations led by people in prison are not typically considered part of the rehabilitation process. The Graterford Branch N.A.A.C.P. and the other organizations within Graterford have produced more than just works by people in prison.

In 2010, Real Street Talk®, a committee established by the Executive Board, was approved by the Graterford Administration to address the transient population within the prison. Sessions were designed to focus on criminal thinking and activity and were facilitated by Graterford Branch N.A.A.C.P.'s members. The Department of Corrections, the U.S. Attorney General's Office, State Representatives, Philadelphia City Councilmen,  

Attorneys, and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole supported and collaborated with the Graterford Branch N.A.A.C.P. in forwarding this message to other prisons and community at large. In turn, L.I.F.E.R.S’ Public Safety Initiative, also joined the effort and helped established an outside component with the creation of the Transformation Navigation Project. Participants voluntarily enrolled in ten-week workshops based on a curriculum developed by Real Street Talk®. The program has expanded toward offices in the community and outside efforts have been spearheaded by Darryl Goodman, a formerly incarcerated person and member of Public Safety Initiative. The ultimate goal of the Transformation Navigation Project was to build relationships with participants and establish successful re-entry into the community.

Historically, the Graterford Branch N.A.A.C.P. was the most recent to be recognized as an organization within the prison. The structure of the organization resembled that of the L.I.F.E.R.S. and L.A.C.E.O. The function and activities of the organization contributed to the unique culture within Graterford. The support of the Graterford Administration and Department of Corrections has substantiated this finding.

V.U.A.A.G.
(Villanova University Alumni Association Graterford Chapter)

The history of the V.U.A.A.G. was traced back to the spring of 1972 (V.U.A.A.G. 4). The Chapter was formed as a result of several incarcerated people earning their bachelor's degrees from Villanova University's satellite at Graterford in the beginning of

35 1420 Walnut Street, Ste 806, Philadelphia, PA. 19102 and 1516 N. Bailey Street, Philadelphia, PA. 19121.
the 1980s. Compared to other organizations, the V.U.A.A.G. was not centralized by the Department of Corrections and was found only at Graterford. Its most distinguished characteristic was its origin. Essentially, it was a product of Superintendent Robert L. Johnson and Dr. James J. McKenna's combined efforts to establish a thirty-credit certificate program within Graterford in the 1970s (4). The plan of starting an Alumni Chapter came much later.

Dr. James J. McKenna studied criminal behavior at Graterford in the early 1970s. Upon the completion of his Doctorate Degree in Sociology from the University of Notre Dame, Dr. McKenna proposed a degree program to Superintendent Johnson. In the spring of 1972, a thirty-credit certificate program in Criminal Justice was started. Ten semesters of course work fulfilled the certificate requirement. Joint classes were open to both incarcerated people and Correctional Officers as college peers. Funding was provided by L.E.A.A.P. (Law Enforcement Assistance Agency Program) until 1976. For three years (1977-1980), both funding and classes were suspended (V.U.A.A.G. 5). Classes resumed in 1981 when Dr. McKenna utilized the Federal Pell Grant to fund the program. As a result, the program eventually provided incarcerated people with an opportunity to earn an accredited Villanova University Bachelor's Degree.

With time, people began to earn Bachelor's Degrees, while the Correctional Officers' participation in the program ceased due to scheduling conflicts (V.U.A.A.G. 5). The number of college graduates in Graterford grew and they desired to continue the Villanova experience with the creation of an Alumni Chapter. In November of 2006, the Alumni Chapter was officially recognized by the Department of Corrections and
Graterford Administration (9). Prior to its official recognition, on April 14, 2005, a constitution and by-laws were ratified by the alumni. On September 20, 2005, the Chartering Ceremony inauguration was attended by thirty-seven Villanova professors and a mixture of fifty-six Villanova alumni and students. In recognition of the founding of the chapter, a 2006 Creative Achievement Award was presented by the Villanova University Alumni Association President, William M. Savino, Esquire, and Executive Director Gary Olsen on October 18, 2006 (V.U.A.A.G. 10). The chapter was the first of its kind in the United States.

Although it was not one of the centralized organizations, the V.U.A.A.G.'s objective was comparable to the L.I.F.E.R.S., L.A.C.E.0., and Graterford Branch N.A.A.C.P.'s missions. Since the inaugural Dr. James J. McKenna Lecture Series on May 18, 2006, numerous professors have entered Graterford to share knowledge on various disciplines. Bingo nights for alumni and students have been held as a community building activity. Once a year, a collective book reading followed by a group discussion in the prison coincided with Villanova University's One Book One Villanova campus series. Villanova students have been welcomed by their Graterford counterparts for discussions on Social and Criminal Justice issues for years. Although no longer in practice, Dr. Joyce Zavarich instructed joint classes with on-campus and Graterford satellite students for four sessions in past semesters. Other activities included participation in the Softball Round-Robin Tournament at Graterford as a fundraising activity for selected charities and annual Math Circle classes were offered to both alumni and students.
The V.U.A.A.G.'s structure announced in its by-laws resembled the other established organizations within Graterford. Elections were held every two years and "no member shall hold more than one office at a time, and no member shall be eligible to serve more than two consecutive terms in office" (Article IV). Articulated in the by-laws were administrative duties, rules governing meetings and elections, and the mission of social justice through education of the chapter. Robert Rule's of Order governed the formation of the alumni chapter's structure.

Villanova University's program originated with the L.I.F.E.R.S. and Para-Professional Law Clinic during Superintendent Johnson's administration; however, it was distinguished by the integration of incarcerated people and correctional officers in the classroom setting.
CHAPTER 4

HOSTAGE INCIDENT OF 1982 AND 1995 RAID ON GRATERFORD

There are two important events worth being mentioned of Graterford's history that falls within the purview of the thesis and speaks to how quickly conditions and policies can change within prison. The hostage incident of October of 1981 and the raid on Graterford in October of 1995 were prime examples of how the Graterford Administration handled events influenced by incarcerated people and politicians.36

In the early evening of Wednesday, October 28, 1981, four people attempted to escape from Graterford by climbing over its thirty foot wall armed with two shotguns, two handguns, and ammunition. The escape point targeted the prison kitchen which gave direct access to the wall surrounding the prison. Some people who worked in the kitchen reported that the escape attempt failed when the iron hooks and ropes gave way under the weight of the men half-way up the wall (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania iii). By that time, correctional officers were en route to confront the men, but a retreat to the kitchen had already begun where six prison staff and thirty-two incarcerated people were taken hostage. Once the kitchen was barricaded, the hostage incident lasted five days and finally concluded when columnist Chuck Stone was chosen by Joseph Bowen, his confederates, and the Administration to be a mediator after several other candidates refused or were deemed unsuitable (14).

Chuck Stone had helped resolve a hunger strike earlier at a Pennsylvania female state prison (SCI-Muncy), including a work stoppage by one-hundred people at another

state institution. He was viewed as a reliable and trustworthy person by Bowen who would guarantee the fulfillment of any agreed upon demands (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania 16). On Monday evening, November 2, 1981, Bowen and three confederates surrendered and were immediately transferred to a federal prison. There was no conclusion by the Panel as to how the weapons and ammunition were smuggled into the prison. Also, no staff was fired. The other escape supplies were found to have been materials from within the prison gathered from work details and hidden throughout the institution. The result of the hostage incident led to an investigation by the Government Panel, which included instructions by Governor Dick Thornburgh to "review the conditions in the correctional system at Graterford" (iii). Fresh in the mind of the Governor, was the recent outbreak of riots in Attica State Prison in New York in 1971, California's San Quentin State Prison in 1971, Huntsville, Texas in 1974, New Mexico State Penitentiary in 1980, and four Michigan state institutions earlier in 1981 (iii). The hostage incident in Graterford did not rise to the level of a prison riot due to the participation of less than one percent of the overall population (4 out of 2,136), since it actually was a failed escape attempt. The main concern was the breach of security within the prison. With the accumulation of weapons, ammunition and manufactured escape materials, former Superintendent Robert L. Johnson's policy of mobility within the prison was surely taken advantage of.

The Government Panel finally concluded the hostage incident was not in response to prison conditions and was the work of a few radical individuals. The Panel made forty-five recommendations surrounding thirteen issues. Most were security and administratively related; however, recommendations for good time, improved medical
treatment and more access to education directly targeted the people's well-being inside Graterford. The accuracy of the panel's findings was difficult to verify. Institutional security has always been a prison administration's primary concern. The Panel's investigation was not insulated from this bias since it was constituted by Government officials. Another factor to consider with respect to the panel's findings was the recent prison work stoppages and hunger strikes at other Pennsylvania state institutions (ii).

The ringleader of the hostage incident, Joseph Bowen, complained of racist inhumane treatment in Graterford; however, it was unclear if this was prevalent in the prison or directed toward him alone. Wherever the truth lies, the organizations were recognized as positive examples of leadership within the prison. As part of the panel's investigation, certain members of the organizations were interviewed along with prison staff, state troopers, police, and district attorneys (iv). More importantly, this incident did not affect the administration's stance on the existence and operation of the organizations.

Ultimately, L.I.F.E.R.S. and the Para-Professional Law Clinic were allowed continued operation as organizations within the prison. Even more compelling, was the eventual formation of several more organizations. This was evidence of the Bureau of Corrections and the Graterford Administration's approach toward this form of structured group activity. Finally, questions surrounding positive administrative philosophy and willingness to embrace progressive approaches to penology arose as a result of this incident. If length of time being served by an incarcerated person, criminal history, or nature of conviction were factors to be considered as indicators for predetermining this form of behavior (hostage incidents or escape attempts) then, the organizations should
have never been formed since their founders shared similar descriptors with Bowen and his confederates. Unfortunately, the complexities involved with such an inquiry lie beyond the scope of this research.

The purpose for the raid on Graterford was entirely different than the Government Panel's investigation of the hostage incident. On the morning of October 25, 1995, six hundred and fifty state troopers and prison guards from across the state, accompanied by thirty drug sniffing dogs raided Graterford prison (Caparella and Constantino 5). The cost of the raid was approximately two million dollars and yielded small amounts of contraband (actually seized before the raid) in comparison to the level of alleged corruption within the institution. Graterford's legacy as a unique state prison was tactically used by the newly appointed Secretary of Corrections, Martin Horn, for the raid's authorization (Constantino 3). While testifying before the Pennsylvania Senate Judiciary Committee, Horn described how the liberal and humanitarian innovations of the 1970s left Graterford in anarchy (Dubler 69). People were stripped searched and their cells searched over a three-day period (Philadelphia Inquirer 1995). Consequently, nine employees were fired, twenty-one people were transferred, and volunteers were barred from entering the prison for nine months (Dubler 70).

As a result of the raid, newly sentenced people were housed in prisons across the state. With good behavior, people could work their way closer to their families. Those people serving life without parole sentences housed in the Outside Service Unit were brought back inside the prison. As a final blow, the religious freedom won by the Muslims in the 1970s to conduct their own services was eventually revoked when the
prison's mosques were closed and religious meetings held collectively by a staff chaplain (Dubler 40). Security was the overriding factor in the abolishment of the favorable ruling outlined by the 1993 Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) (Al-Samad 1995). Yet again, the organizations were allowed to function despite the new Administration's emphasis on punitive corrections (Dubler 338). This was mostly due to the cache the organizations developed since the 1970s and the memberships' resiliency.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY

An article featuring the L.I.F.E.R.S captured the organization's perspective on rehabilitation and transformation. The organization's leadership stated, "rehabilitation is external, behavior oriented and revisits the past. Transformation is internal, changes thinking, and is future oriented" (The Philadelphia Public Record 61).

The essence of the statement was consistently found throughout the primary sources reviewed and appropriately applied to all the organizations within Graterford. Of all the Pennsylvania state prisons, Graterford had the most organizations. This unique prison feature was directly attributed to Superintendent Robert L. Johnson's perspective about people in prison as evidenced by his statement, "my philosophy is that when you are dealing with a person in prison, you are dealing with a human being, not with absolutes." Such a philosophical approach challenged the Deprivation Model articulated by Donald Clemmer, Gresham Sykes, and Stanton Wheeler's prison studies.

It is important to reiterate that Clemmer conducted his study at Menard Penitentiary, Illinois, in 1940. From there, he developed the concept of prisonization (Clemmer 1940). Overall, the concept projected negative connotations characterized by subcultures, mores, and customs particular to Menard Penitentiary, in the 1940s. Central

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37 Holy Name Society v. Horn. U.S. Dist. LEXIS 12756, Eastern District Court of Pennsylvania, 2001; For other organizations led by incarcerated people at SCI-Dallas, see Commonwealth v. Klinger. 20 PA. D&C 5th, PA. District and County, 2010.

38 For a biographical examination of Superintendent Johnson's trajectory from warden to pastor, see Booker, Vaughn and David Phillips. From Prison to Pulpit. Cadell & Davies, 1994, pp. 120-141.
to Clemmer's theory was the idea of the most *prisonized* being least likely to reform on the outside.

Clemmer's theory was broadened by the introduction of Gresham Sykes' pains of imprisonment concept. Sykes conducted his study at New Jersey's Trenton State Penitentiary and found that prison subculture was a response to the loss of liberty, autonomy, heterosexual relationships, security, goods and services. Sykes' theory was rooted in the observation of an incarcerated person's cooperation or retreat from the prison culture.

This conceptual analysis of people in prison, along with Clemmer's theory, rounded out the framework for the Deprivation Model. It is difficult to apply these findings universally, since there are different security levels of prisons due to the classification system introduced by the Federal Bureau of Prisons in 1946 (Sheldon et al. 272). People were designated to minimum, medium, or maximum security prisons according to their classified levels. The difficulty in determining how significant this factor related to Clemmer and Sykes' Deprivation Model remains unresolved. However, Graterford's unique organizational culture provided clues as to how a universal application of their theories may be inappropriate.

An admixture of people with differing classification levels may have produced various subcultures within Graterford preventing the emergence of a dominant one. Graterford housed people with different classification levels and still produced a number of structured organizations that created, in part, a positive prison subculture. Additionally,

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geographical prison norms such as gang activity vary between states and even prisons within those states. Gang activity was not found to be one of the prison subcultures at Graterford. More importantly, the era these studies were conducted in cannot be considered transcendental. Revision is always at the forefront of history.

Furthermore, Stanton Wheeler empirically tested Clemmer's prisonization concept in a study at Washington State Reformatory. According to Wheeler's findings, Clemmer's concept was sound. As a result, Wheeler expanded the theory by adding three phases to *prisonization*. Each phase could measure the degree of prisonization experienced by a person by observing the beginning six months, time in between, and final six months of incarceration (Wheeler 697-712). Wheeler's findings were particular to Washington State Reformatory in 1961. The Reformatory style of corrections was extremely regimented, disciplinary, and administratively violent. These were conditions worthy of serious consideration before adopting Wheeler's findings as accurate. In addition, the scientific approach to teaching people or curing them of criminogenic disease was conducted under total control of the institution (Sheldon et al. 271). Paternalism and infantilization were prominent elements of this model of corrections as well.

Consequently, the Deprivation Model has contributed to the popular myths of people in prison. Aside from the critical reviews it received from prison experts, it has persisted as a frequently referenced framework which characterized incarcerated people (Reid 472). The Deprivation Model compared the subculture within prison through norms, values, and customs normally seen on the outside (Clemmer 299). Similarly, a
contemporary of Clemmer and Sykes, John Irwin, studied 116 incarcerated people in California in the 1960s (Irwin 74). Irwin's study resembled the methodological processes shared by Clemmer, Sykes, and Wheeler. The paucity of the sample size or limitation to one particular location, irrespective of the duration of the study, yielded scientific findings that were applied universally to incarcerated people without critical analysis until years later.40

Ironically, the resemblance between the Deprivation Model and past theories of criminality were striking. In the eighteenth century, Franz Joseph Gall applied a pseudo-scientific method of analyzing patterns of bumps on a person's head as indicators for the potentiality of criminal behavior (phrenology). Cesare Lombroso conducted hundreds of autopsies on Italian people in prison in order to substantiate his proposition on criminality as a throwback to our primal state. The reading of body types (physiognomy), genetically transmitted criminality, or how abnormal brain waves contributed to criminal behavior remains unsubstantiated.41 The influences of these scientific claims are immeasurable, even when there is insufficient evidence to identify criminality between people who commit crime and those who do not.42

Similarly, the research conducted revealed how some state prisons and their incarcerated people challenged the stereotypes associated with the popular myths of

41 This section leaned heavily on Sheldon et al. 69-70.
42 Vold, George et al. Theoretical Criminology. 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 1986, p. 107; For a neurological analysis that distinguished the level of culpability between 18 and older and 17 and younger aged people in a United States Supreme Court decision see, Miller v. Alabama. 2012 US LEXIS 4873, Supreme Court of U.S., 2012; For other theories on criminality such as, Psychological, Psychoanalytical, Personality Trait, Sociological, Strain, and several more, see Sheldon et al., 71-87.
people in prison.\textsuperscript{43} More importantly, how the Deprivation Model fared when compared to the organizational culture found at Graterford.

During the shift in correctional philosophy in the 1970s, the organizations at Graterford began to establish a platform and created equity within the prison and the Department of Corrections. As a result, they have situated themselves within the institution as repositories of individuals who debunk the popular myths of people in prison. If examined in a vacuum, the hostage incident of 1981 and the raid on Graterford of 1995 would confirm the standard set by the Deprivation Model.

On further inspection, the hostage incident confirmed that the organizations were antithetical examples of people embracing the stereotypical prison subculture. The creations of the organizations were voluntary actions by incarcerated people, most of who were sentenced to life without parole and wanted to positively transform other people inside the prison and the larger community. Their works were self-motivated and dissimilar to the Building Tender system found in Texas and prisons throughout the world.\textsuperscript{44} A culture never seen in Pennsylvania Corrections began to be cultivated which eventually flourished. Graterford became a market place of ideas. Empowered people began to develop projects that addressed identified personal and communal needs. It was

\textsuperscript{43} For information on John Jay College's Prison-to-College Pipeline program in a New York State Prison see, Dreisinger, Baz. Incarceration Nation. Other Press, 2016; For another program in New York (Fortune Society) that is operated by former incarcerated people helping returning citizens reintegrate into society, see Siegel and Senna 542; see also Donaldson Correctional Facility in Alabama for being the first to hold a ten-day Vipassana retreat in a maximum security state penitentiary requiring 100 hours of meditation, Phillips, Jenny et al. “The Dhamma Brothers: East Meets West in the Deep South. Freedom Behind Bars Production; http:/www.dhammadbrothers.com.

\textsuperscript{44} The Building Tender system of prison control through the use of the incarcerated elite was found in Texas and the Soviet Union, Solzhenitsyn, India, Australia, and French Guiana around the time the organizations appeared in Graterford. Marquart, James W. and Ben M. Crouch. "Judicial Reform and Prisoner Control: The Impact of Ruiz v. Estelle on a Texas Penitentiary". Law and Society Review, vol.19, No. 4, 1985, p. 562.
clear; if people within a prison were given a degree of autonomy they would produce structured programs that addressed issues they have intimate knowledge of.

The Graterford Administration was proactive in the development and sustainment of the organizations. Superintendent Johnson set a precedent of allowing people in Graterford to congregate and develop structured groups without administrative interference or input. Following Administrations adopted the policy and expanded it by authorizing subsequent organizations long after his departure from Graterford. The Department of Corrections' policy of rehabilitation and education was instrumental in the process as well. As a top-down model of administration, the Secretary of Corrections endorsed Superintendent Johnson's rehabilitative plan rather than a disciplinary correctional approach. Unfortunately, this approach had drawbacks. Some people were incompliant with the emerging culture influenced by the organizations and Administration. 45 Also, not all Pennsylvania prisons adopted Superintendent Johnson's philosophy of rehabilitation. This phenomenon contributed to Graterford's mystique as a unique penitentiary in the Commonwealth.

It was not until a changing of the guard in 1995 that Graterford's open policy of rehabilitation and mobility within the prison was terminated. New Governor Tom Ridge and Secretary Martin Horn used the raid on Graterford as a symbolic testimonial of their new tough on crime policy. Stories of corruption, drugs, and violence were conflated with hyperbole and fact. To what degree will never truly be known; however, what is known is that those elements exist within any branch of government, law enforcement,

45 For an indication of violence before and after the raid, see Dubler 73. There were 102 reported assaults in 1995 and 32 in 1998.
and corrections. Ironically, the organizations survived the policy changes and continued their works.

Conclusion

The research conducted, which included documented sociological works have established that not all prisons are crucibles for criminal activity.46 Also revealed, was the conclusion that not all incarcerated people suffer from a criminogenic nature. It was apparent that Graterford's Administration, along with the Secretary of the Bureau of Corrections in the early 1970s, wanted to empower the people rather than focus on their cure or discipline. In turn, people within the institution responded with the creation of an organization designed to address social and personal needs. With an unprecedented amount of administrational flexibility, other organizations emerged within Graterford prison. Until now, these acts were never researched and presented in the form of a historical account.

The Administration and organizations worked toward the same goal. The fact that both shared a racial and social connection in a time when the Civil Rights Movement was fresh in the minds of the American public provided clues as to why Graterford was administratively different than other Pennsylvania prisons. The proximity of Graterford to Philadelphia, its size as the largest prison in the state, and its predominantly

46 Dreisinger 1-57; Siegel and Senna 542.
African American population were elements, at the time, that were conducive to the creation of a unique prison culture.47

The history and the works of the organizations challenged the fallacy of the popular myths of people in prison. There were no organizations in the state of Pennsylvania before 1970. It was not until the emergence of forward-minded people and a will to change personal and societal conditions that Graterford prison distinguished itself from other correctional institutions within the state. A universal application of these myths should be questioned or completely abandoned considering the number of the organizations and their members' level of voluntary participation in structured functions and projects in Graterford.

The theory of the Deprivation Model created an ostensible truth about people in prison. Academically, researches confirmed preconceived notions about people in prison that were embedded in the minds of the public's psyche through daily news cycles and hyperbolized prison stories. Another major factor that contributed to the misperception of people in prison was the lack of any mainstream representation of productive works found in Graterford or other institutions. Ultimately, the thesis presented the conclusion that not all prisons are crucibles for criminal activity.

Social history as a methodology; specifically, history from below, was not only utilized as an approach to structure this historical account. The methodology was incorporated due to its focus on "seeing the past from the point of view of ordinary people and identifying with their politics" (Tosh 71). In the prison context, the voices

and grievances of the people have not only been censored, but narrated by others than themselves. The methodology of history from below allowed for a more accurate representation of the organizations' history. When George Rude studied revolutionary Paris, he refused to use the word “mob” in describing the people (71). Similarly, a conscientious effort was made in this thesis to capture the motives, essence, and agency of the people without the use of language that diminished or dehumanized them and their works. Many of the primary and secondary sources utilized possessed labeling language that has promoted negative perceptions about people in prison. Ironically, the people in prison themselves demonstrated how infectious and pervasive the effect was with the use of labeling language in their works.

Social History has seen an evolution from the broad scope of documenting society as a whole to a more focused account of social structure; specifically, "the sum of the social relationships between the many different groups in society" (Tosh 72). With this in mind, the intention of the research and thesis sought to introduce society to a social group often forgotten and misrepresented. The prison community has often been viewed in the abstract as separated from society. The works of the organizations at Graterford prison has conclusively demonstrated that this perception is one sided. The people involved in the organizations saw themselves as part of the larger community.

Much like society, prison life in Graterford was not static. There was a level of social mobility found in the prison. The changing of staff, correctional officers, and administrative policies in the early 1970s often represented a dynamic process characterized by unpredictability. From one day to the next, the prison no longer
operated as a total institution. One can only surmise the effect this had on a person incarcerated at Graterford. What is known is that some of the prison population embraced the positive elements of the transition as evidenced by the creation of the organizations. Others resisted the change in the prison structure and responded with an escape attempt and hostage incident. The central question of the thesis and its relation to the approach of Social History captured the intricacy of these types of historical accounts. With a more focused approach in mind, the historical research of the organizations at Graterford prison expanded the width of the history from below lens. People in prison have and always will be part of society as a whole.

Finally, as a recommendation for future research of this type, any starting point should begin with the identification of prison administrations similar to Graterford. In addition, a collaborative effort should be conducted between an incarcerated person and outside researcher. This will provide the unique insight of someone in prison and access to otherwise inaccessible resources to draw from such as restricted data. Documentation of the organizations' works in the larger community and their impact should also be included in future theses of this kind. Finally, any research in prison should be conducted absent of paternalism, exoticism, or the belief of helping the incarcerated.
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